NHS
Calderdale and Huddersfield
NHS Foundation Trust

# Antibiotic patient information leaflet

## What are antibiotics used for?

Antibiotics are prescribed to treat an infection caused by bacteria or to prevent you from developing an infection (this is called 'prophylaxis').

## How do antibiotics work?

Antibiotics work by either killing the bacteria, or stopping them from growing and increasing in number. Antibiotics only work against bacteria they do not work against viruses such as common colds, flu, most coughs and sore throats.

## How and when should I take my antibiotics?

Antibiotics are prescribed for a specific period of time – often 5-7 days. The number of times you will need to take them will be shown on the label of the antibiotic. You will need to take them at regular times during the day (you do not need to wake at night specifically to take your antibiotic).
Always take them as directed by your doctor and do not stop taking them early, even if your symptoms improve. Bacteria can still be in the body even when you are feeling better, so it is important to finish the full course of antibiotics. This will make it less likely for the infection to return.

## Should I take my antibiotics before, with or after food?

Some antibiotics cannot be taken with certain foods or drinks because they make the antibiotic less effective, reducing the chances of a full recovery. Refer to the leaflet which will be inside the packet with your antibiotic for information or ask your pharmacist or doctor.

## Are there any possible side effects?

The most common side-effects with antibiotics are diarrhoea, feeling sick and vomiting. After treatment with some antibiotics, you might get a fungal infection such as thrush (speak to your pharmacist or doctor if you are concerned).

Very rarely antibiotics can cause very severe diarrhoea. If this occurs you need to let your doctor know as soon as possible.

Some people think they have had an allergic reaction to antibiotics, when really it was a side-effect, for example nausea, diarrhoea. If you are allergic to antibiotics, for example penicillin, you may get side-effects such as a rash and itching or, in severe cases, difficulty breathing. If you experience difficulty breathing, you must ring for an ambulance straight away.

If you think you have had an allergic reaction to an antibiotic before always tell your doctor or pharmacist. The more information you can give about the reaction the better because it can help to decide on the right antibiotic for you.

compassionate care

## Other information

- Don't take medicines prescribed for another person or give yours to someone else. What is safe for you may not be for someone else.
- Medicines can affect or be affected by other medicines. Check with your doctor or pharmacist about drug interactions if you have any concerns.
- Talk to your doctor if you are or are planning to become pregnant or are breast feeding. Further information is available in the leaflet supplied with your medicine.
- If you are unable to finish the treatment course, please take any unused antibiotics to your local chemist for disposal. Do not keep "just in case" for future use.

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## If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Antibiotic Pharmacist
Pharmacy Department

Huddersfield Royal Infirmary
Telephone No: 01484 347123

Calderdale Royal Hospital
Telephone No: 01422 224355

www.cht.nhs.uk

## If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

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